

Newscast

Region 4 of The American Iris Society

Vol. 41, No. 2

AUGUST 1999



AMERICAN

IRIS

SOCIETY

REGION 4 BULLETIN

Newscast

DISTRICT of COLUMBIA MARYLAND NORTH CAROLINA

VIRGINIA WEST VIRGINIA

Volume 1 No. 1

August 4, 1959

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Communications regarding **American Iris Society membership, dues and change of address** should be addressed to **Marilyn Harlow**.

Region 4 is comprised of the states of **Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia,** and the **District of Columbia**.

NEWSCAST is free to AIS members in Region 4. Subscription rate for those not in Region 4 is \$5.00 per year. Checks made to Region 4, American Iris Society should be sent to the Region 4 Treasurer.

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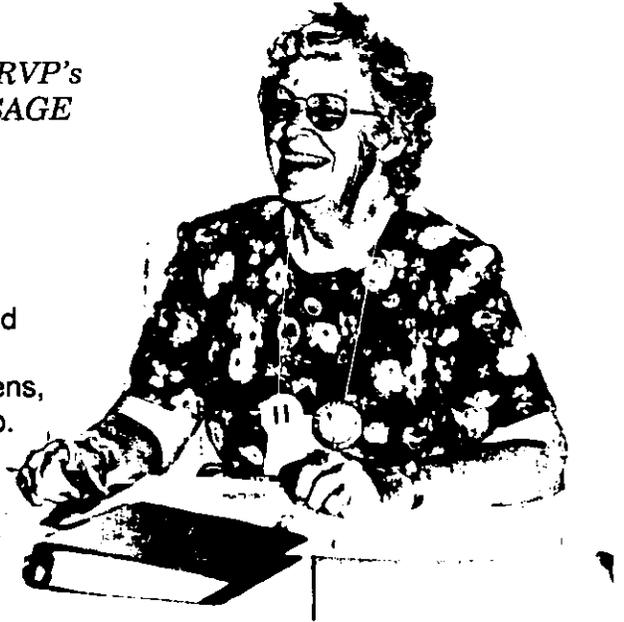
The Purposes of The American Iris Society, and Region 4, shall be to develop the science of horticulture and any activities related to the study, propagation and culture of the genus Iris; to stimulate and foster interest in horticultural pursuits, conservation and protection of these plants; to cooperate with other organizations, public and private, in the scientific and horticultural education of all those interested in learning any phase of the genus Iris, by any and all means which may be determined from time to time by the Board of Directors. These shall include but are not limited to:

- a) encouragement and support of scientific research, including those pertaining to the solution of diseases related to but not necessarily exclusive to the genus Iris, and investigation and conservation of the genus in the wild;
- b) collection, compilation, and publication of data concerning the history, classification, breeding and culture of Irises; and,
- c) education of the public through exhibitions, public display gardens, published standards for judging, and local, area, regional, and national meetings open to the public.

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*RVP's
MESSAGE*



This issue of *Newscast* contains the minutes and reports of the various officers and committee chairmen given at the Region Board meeting held in Winchester, VA, on May 21, 1999. For those of you who were unable to attend the business meeting and the other activities, you missed out on not only a wealth of knowledge, but beautiful gardens, good food, another great auction and wonderful fellowship.

Also in this issue, our Editor Roy Epperson, is devoting several pages to the 40th Anniversary of Region 4 (as it is now geographically configured), its history and that of several of the affiliate chapters/societies. He also states that he is the only remaining charter member who has maintained continuous membership with AIS. (Dr. Lloyd Zurbrigg has the longest continuous membership having joined in 1948!)

Please be reminded to **mark the TB Symposium Ballot and send it to me** in a timely manner. Last year, only 14.14% of the Region 4 membership (94 ballots) voted. Our membership, this year is 654, so at 15%, that means 98 ballots. Let's try to send in at least 100. I know it can be done.

Also, you will find a ballot in the July *AIS Bulletin*, concerning an AIS bylaws change. Please reply to that also. Be involved! You will be glad that you did.

Speaking about voting, enough people voted for Don Spoon's 1999 introduction UNCLE CHARLIE (named for Charlie Nearpass), so that it received the Franklin Cook Memorial Cup at the 1999 National Convention in Oklahoma City. This is voted by all persons attending the Convention. Congratulations, Don!

This year's Region 4 garden awards are:

Alice Bouldin Award for best Region 4 seedling: MY GINNY (Spoon '00)

Nearpass Award for best Region 4 introduced cultivar: JOAN'S PLEASURE (Zurbrigg '93)

B.Y. Morrison Award for best out-of-Region introduced cultivar: EPICENTER (Ghio '94)

Some of you have heard by now that I have accepted the position of Secretary of The American Iris Society. Ruth Simmons' untimely death necessitated immediate action by the Executive Committee of AIS. I feel very honored to have been considered for the position and I have assumed the duties of the Secretary as of July 15. JaNiece Mull of the Tidewater Iris Society has been elected as RVP and will assume those duties after confirmation by the AIS Board of Directors at their fall meeting in St. Louis. Thank you all for the wonderful mentoring and cooperation that you have given me and it is my wish that you will do likewise with JaNiece. I am very confident that she will serve the Region well.

As of this writing, there will be a need for a 'new' Editor of *Newscast* to be in place as of January 1, 2000. Roy indicated that is how long he would be able to be 'temporary'. Also the Regional Auction Chairman position is vacant.

An out-of-region activity that Walter and I participated in (I'm the HIPS Display Garden chairman), was the pre-convention garden tour sponsored by HIPS and held during the Memorial Day weekend. Helen Schueler is chairman, assisted by Donna James. The event will take place the first weekend of June 2000 in the Syracuse area of New York and will be hosted by the Central New York Iris Society. We had a first-hand view of five of the six gardens that are preparing for 200+ conventioners. I had read about or saw pictures of many of the 'older ones' and it was a real pleasure for me to see them in the flesh. The host gardeners are well on their way to accomplishing their goals. Walter and I are looking forward to attending the first-ever HIPS mini-convention next year.

On a sad note, many of you have inquired about the ewe that was attacked by a don on May 21st (Friday evening of the Spring Meeting). She would have had a very slow and painful recovery and then might not have been able to move freely and care for any lambs that she might have. We regretfully had to put her down.

Walter and I will continue to participate on the local and regional levels as much as we can. We are looking to seeing you at the Fall meeting to be hosted by Eastern North Carolina Iris Society, the end of October.

Sara



RVP Sara Marley (left) and RVP-elect JaNiece Mull

1999 FALL MEETING OF REGION 4

HOSTS: Eastern North Carolina Iris Society

HEADQUARTERS: Sheraton Imperial - Research Triangle Park, North Carolina

PROGRAM: Friday, October 29, 1999

Noon to 6:00 p.m.	Registration
2:00 to 3:00 p.m.	Entries received for Show
4:00 to 10:00 p.m.	Show Open to Public
6:00 p.m.	Informal Social Time
6:30 p.m.	Welcome Dinner
7:15 p.m.	Guest Speaker: Dr. Bob Lyons, Director J. C. Raulston Arboretum, NCSU, Raleigh
8:30 to 10:00 p.m.	Fall Regional Board Meeting

Saturday, October 30, 1999

8:30 a.m. to noon	Carpooled Garden Visits (Zurbrigg garden, Jones garden, J. C. Raulston Arboretum, Duke Gardens)
Lunch on your own	
2:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Fall Regional Auction
6:30 p.m.	Informal Social Time
7:00 p.m.	Banquet
8:30 p.m.	Judges' Training on Preparing a Show Schedule and Implementing an AIS Accredited Show

Registration Form is enclosed in the mailing envelope.

*Fri - Veggie
Sat - Chicken*

TREASURER'S REPORT

February 1, 1999 through July 1, 1999

Balance on February 1, 1999 (Checking only) \$ 11,590.06

Receipts

Spring Regional Auction	\$ 1,947.00
Donation: Eastern Shore Iris Society	\$ 200.00
Out-of-Region <i>Newscast</i> subscription	\$ 3.00
Interest on Account	\$ 56.70
	=====
	\$ 2,206.70

Expenditures

Epperson - March <i>NEWSCAST</i>	
Printing and Mailing	\$ 796.86
Dr. Hornstein - reimbursement for mailing '98	
Convention guest iris	\$ 55.00
RVP Marley - Postage & Printing	\$ 44.30
RVP Marley - Allowance for attending Spring	
& Fall AIS Board Meetings	\$ 600.00
Clarence Mahan - Auction sales slips	\$ 23.24
Past RVP Lowe - Expenses May-Nov '98	\$ 85.69
American Iris Society -	
Donation to Bea Warburton Award Fund	\$ 250.00
Clark American - Printing checks	\$ 10.45
Withdrawal for CD - 24 month "2003 Convention"	\$ 3,164.34
	=====
	\$ 5,029.88

Net balance on July 1, 1999 \$ 8,766.88

Certificate of Deposit Assets

No. 1: Toward "2003 National Convention"	\$ 2,000.00
No. 2: Toward " <i>Newscast</i> culture issue"	\$ 600.00
No. 3: Toward "2003 National Convention"	\$ 2,307.00
No. 4: Toward "2003 National Convention"	\$ 3,164.34
	=====
	\$ 8,071.34

Complete Current Net Assets on July 1, 1999 \$ 16,834.22

Submitted by J. Owings Rebert, Treasurer

FORTY YEARS OF REGION 4

E. Roy Epperson

Earl T. Browder, the second RVP of Region 4, wrote in *NEWSCAST*, May 1974, "The American Iris Society came into being. In an effort to carry the beauty of the Iris to as many and as quickly as it could, the Society divided the Country into six Regions. These proved too large and unwieldy and were themselves divided and redivided until today we have a total of twenty-four Regions."

Region 4 as we geographically know it today - encompassing the District of Columbia, Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia - came into being in 1959.

Browder wrote: "Claude C. O'Brien, a druggist from Greensboro, North Carolina, became our Regional Vice President - and he at once set out to organize the Region. He ran me to earth in a corner of the Skirven Hotel in Oklahoma City and charged me to "go home from here and organize West Virginia for The American Iris Society - quickly." Claude divided the Region into six (6) areas and appointed Area Chairmen for the North Carolina Area, North West Virginia Area, South West Virginia Area, Maryland (and District of Columbia) Area, Eastern Virginia Area (centered in Norfolk), and Western Virginia Area (centered in Roanoke). These have now evolved into the twelve (12) Affiliated Societies within Region 4. The Maryland and Blue Ridge Chapters have disbanded.

The Regional Vice Presidents of Region 4 have been:

1959 - 1961	Claude C. O'Brien	North Carolina
1962 - 1964	Earl T. Browder	West Virginia
1965 - 1967	Rena Frantz Crumpler	Virginia
1968	Frank Sherrill	North Carolina
1969 - 1970	Maynard Harp	Maryland
1971 - 1974	William D. Kelley	West Virginia
1975 - 1976	Anne Lee	Virginia
1977 - 1980	E. Roy Epperson	North Carolina
1981 - 1983	Claire Barr	Maryland
1984 - 1986	B. J. Brown	North Carolina
1987 - 1989	Lloyd Zurbrigg	Virginia
1990 - 1992	Carol Warner	Maryland
1993 - 1995	E. Roy Epperson	North Carolina
1996 - 1998	Anne Lowe	Virginia
1998 - 1999	Sara W. Marley	Virginia
2000 - 2002	JaNiece Mull	Virginia

There have been three (3) RVPs from Maryland, four (4) from North Carolina, six (6) from Virginia, two (2) from West Virginia and none from the District of Columbia.

Although not a geographical part of Region 4 until 1959, North Carolina was very active in iris activities. The North Carolina Iris Society (NCIS) was established in 1950, held annual spring

one-day meetings in various gardens and published the *North Carolina Iris Society Bulletin*. For many years after the current configuration of Region 4, NCIS and Region 4 both held annual meetings occasionally joining their meetings when Region 4 met in North Carolina. Realizing that the Region 4 annual meetings and the NCIS annual meetings were overlapping in most bloom seasons, NCIS disbanded and distributed its outstanding treasury funds to the Eastern North Carolina Iris Society, the Charlotte Iris Society, and the Region 4 treasury. B. J. Brown, Frances Brown, and E. Roy Epperson served as Presidents of NCIS (and also served as Editors of the NCIS *Bulletin*).

NEWSCAST was initiated in 1959 as the publication of Region 4. It has gone through several formats over the years. The following persons have served as Editors.

1959 (August) - 1961 (November)	Nannie Paquet
1962 (April) - 1963 (April)	Richard Meagher
1963 (July)	Rena Frantz
1963 (October) - 1965 (July)	Donald Michel
1965 (August) - 1965 (December)	Rena Frantz
1966 (March) - 1967 (December)	Martha Davidson
1968 (April) - 1974 (May)	Rena Frantz Crumpler
1974 (August) - 1977 (August)	E. Roy Epperson
1978 (January) - 1981 (January)	Rena Frantz Crumpler
1981 (April) - 1985 (September)	B.J. and Frances Brown
1986 (January) - 1988 (December)	Clarence Mahan
1989 (March) - 1991 (December)	Mike and Anne Lowe
1992 (March) - 1994 (December)	Phil Ogilvie
1995 (March) - 1998 (August)	Dennis Stoneburner
1998 (December)- 2000 (December)	E. Roy Epperson

AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY ACTIVITIES IN 1959

Annual Convention: Skirvin Hotel, Oklahoma City, OK
 Advance Registration: \$ 25.00
 Double room at the hotel: \$ 9.50 to \$ 16.00

The Exhibition Committee reported 85 approved shows. (In 1999, there have been 190 shows approved; 13 of those in Region 4.)

Dykes Memorial Medal : SWAN BALLETT (Tell Muhlestein)

THE POPULARITY POLL (top 10)

BLUE SAPPHIRE
 VIOLET HARMONY
 MARY RANDALL
 TRULY YOURS
 PALOMINO
 HAPPY BIRTHDAY

SABLE NIGHT
FIRST VIOLET
JUNE MEREDITH
LIMELIGHT

(How many of these, if any, do you still grow?)

1959 Membership Campaign Winners

The Grand Prize of a life membership to the Regional Vice-president of the Region which achieved the highest net membership gain was won by Mr. Claude C. O'Brien, RVP of Region 4, with a net increase of 37%.

The Grand Prize of a life membership to the Regional Vice-President of the Region which achieved the highest percentage gain in new members in excess of its assigned quota of 25% of its membership, was also won by Mr. Claude C. O'Brien, RVP of Region 4, with an excess of 90%.

Region 4 membership on October 1, 1958: 207

1959 Quota : 52

New members reported by RVP : 99

Total new members : 120

Region 4 membership on October 1, 1959: 284 (net gain of 77)

* * * * *

From the AIS *Bulletin*, January 1959:

For show blooms I use a formula that may appear peculiar. It consists of one spade of fresh pigeon manure, a handful of super-phosphate, one cup of soot, and one-half dozen Vitamin B1. This is dissolved in 12 gallons of water, heated to 98 degrees and cooled. Give a half pint to each iris, about 5 inches away from the rhizome, when the buds appear. Repeat every 3 or 4 days during flowering. **A. Robertson Gordon, Victoria, Australia.**

Editor's Note: Fred G. Stephenson is ALIVE AND WELL. A contribution to the AIS Foundation by the Blue Ridge Iris Society was incorrectly listed as a Memorial rather than an Honorarium. Fred has contributed two (2) articles to this issue of *NEWSCAST*.

BLUE RIDGE IRIS SOCIETY

FROM GLORY TO OBLIVION

Fred G. Stephenson

From the very beginning, Roanoke has played an important part in The American Iris Society in that a Roanoker, Mr. J.P. Fishburn was growing irises and was active in creating AIS. His garden was one of the very first to be established as a "test" garden. Mr. Fishburn served as Vice President of AIS from 1943 to 1946. Prior to that he served as a Director from 1937 to 1948 and Treasurer 1937 to 1942. For his outstanding work, he was awarded the DSM (Distinguished Service Medal) in 1949.

Information on iris activities for the next few years is very sparse. On March 28, 1963, the Iris Society of Roanoke was organized "....a group of 20 iris enthusiasts met at the Garden Center in Roanoke to organize the iris society of Roanoke. Mrs. Fred Perkins, Vice President of Region 4, presided and spoke briefly on the advantages of organization." "The group voted to organize as a society and have as its purpose the promotion of iris culture. Mrs. F. Allen Brown was elected as the society's first president.....Mr. Fishburn was Advisor.."

Apparently, other societies were in existence or were organized as *Bulletin No. 136* has a report from The Vinton Valley Iris Society. The report indicates they were organized prior to the Roanoke group. I have also read of the existence of a "Fincastle Iris Group." Even though we had a regional designation, individual areas were not organized.

In 1961, Mr. Claude C. O'Brien, Region 4 RVP, launched a campaign to establish individual organizations as Chapters of the Regional organization. In the spring of 1962, Mr. O'Brien came to Roanoke to explain the new organization. A number of us met with him in the old Roanoke Library and this was the beginning of really local societies.

For many years Roanoke was one of the most active groups in Region 4. We had over 60 members, all active. Members of this group were Martha and Jim Davison, Rockbridge Baths, Joe Lynn, Marge Murray, Bert Cup, Mrs. Grow, all from the Lexington area. Louis MacDonald and another from Lynchburg. Jeanne Price, Mrs. Disney and Dave and others from the Blacksburg-Radford area. Our meetings were well attended and interest was at a peak because of diversity of local areas and the many different people.

Our Iris Sales attracted members from the West Virginia, Maryland, Tidewater Virginia, and North Carolina. It was not uncommon to have as many as 75 at each sale and bidding was extremely active. A "potluck" lunch was always served at the host location. Great fellowship was had as we got to know each other.

During their term of office, three AIS Presidents visited Roanoke and a good rapport resulted.

The highlight for Roanoke came with hosting the National Convention in 1974. This Convention was to be held in Akron, Ohio, but the host hotel burned in early 1972. AIS was in the process of cancelling for that year, but Dr. Hugo Wall, AIS President, who had visited Roanoke twice, asked the decision be delayed. Dr. Wall called me because he and I had worked very closely on some projects and related his problem and asked if I thought Roanoke could handle the Convention on such short notice. I told him that we might have trouble getting hotel reservations. I contacted the Hotel Roanoke and luckily only a small nurses convention had been scheduled and they were able to shift that to another location. Dr. Wall then asked me to reserve the hotel in the name of AIS. The Region 4 RVP at that time was furious that he had not been contacted. He reluctantly went along with the decision to host the Convention.

The Convention host usually has five or more years to plan, but here we had to do everything in less than two years! Through the cooperation of the other Region 4 Chapters, 1974 turned out to be a highlight convention that still brings many favorable comments.

About this time, the National AIS organization was trying to form a comprehensive Judges' Training Program. Region 4 got to work on this and it was well received by AIS and was adopted, almost in its entirety as the National Program. (Editor's note: Fred Stephenson was the author and promoter of the JT program.)

Unfortunately, interest in irises started downhill following the Convention. The older members were gradually passing on, leaving so many that just did not have the interest required to maintain a program. It was during this period that Blue Ridge Iris Society changed from a Chapter and became an Affiliate of AIS. After much effort to increase interest and attendance, only 5 or 6 members were active and it was with great reluctance that we, the active members, voted to disband.

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY CHAPTER

(From Report of FSK Chapter to Region 4 Board, November 11, 1967)

Maynard E. Harp, Chapter Chairman

For several years my wife, Retta, and I had thought there may be some advantages if another Chapter of the AIS were formed for those members who would find it convenient to meet in the Baltimore area. So we inquired concerning this at the Regional Convention at Norfolk in May 1967.

On May 18, I mailed a letter to Mr. Frank Bennett, Chairman of the Chesapeake and Potomac Chapter, advising him of our having received permission from the Regional Board to form a new Chapter which would be a separation from the Chesapeake and Potomac Chapter, and that we would make this endeavor.

On July 9, we held an organizational meeting at which the following was voted approval:

* Our group to be known as the Francis Scott Key Chapter, Region 4, AIS.

* The Chapter's geographical area to consist of the political sub-divisions of Maryland known as Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, and Harford County. Inclusion of any additional area was left for possible later consideration. Included with this report is a map of Maryland for reference.

* Pending development of our By Laws, interim officers elected were Maynard E. Harp, Chapter Chairman, William, J. Hull, Sr., Chapter Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Glenn W. (Anne) Allen, Secretary, William E. Conard, Treasurer, and Mrs. John D. (Libby) Cross, Jr., Parliamentarian.

* A By Laws Committee was appointed.

Our first annual meeting and luncheon was held at the Tail of the Fox, Timonium, MD, on September 30. Thirty-two were present....A feature of the meeting was a fine talk by Keith Keppel....Table arrangements brought by various members included a refreshing assortment of reblooming iris by Anne Allen....So, at our meeting, we had a roster of 28 individual memberships and 9 family memberships, making a total of 46 in our Chapter. The Francis Scott Key Chapter, in less that three months from its organizational meeting, has more than doubled the AIS membership in its geographical area. An example of the lively interest of our group is shown by the fact that the 25 new members (Editor's note: Claire Barr was one of these) were obtained by ten different persons.



First officers of FSK - 1967 (L to R Bill Conard, Treasurer; Libby Cross, Parliamentarian; Maynard Harp, President; Anne Allen, Secretary; Jimmy Hull, Vice President)

CHARLOTTE IRIS SOCIETY

The Charlotte Iris Society was organized on March 1, 1948, to promote the culture and improvement of the 'Iris.' Mr. W. J. McKee, a nationally known hybridizer and a director of The American Iris Society (AIS), spoke to a joint meeting of the Charlotte Garden Club and the Garden Department of the Charlotte Women's Club. A nominating committee was appointed and a second meeting was held March 11, 1948. The name Charlotte Iris Society (CIS) was chosen and officers were elected and installed. The first president was Mrs. S. L. Whitmore (who became Mrs. S. A. Oscar a few months later). Individual dues were set at \$ 3.00 per year. There were 32 regular members and five honorary members at that time.

The first iris garden tour was held in May 1949 and was an out-of-town trip to Spartanburg, SC. The first iris show was held in 1951 at the local Sears store and a spring show has been held each year since that time with the exception of 1963 and 1992. In 1963, a very late frost on May 3 caused the show to be canceled, whereas the 1992 show was canceled to avoid conflict with the AIS convention in Atlanta. In 1951, CIS boasted over 100 local members and the first community project was initiated - the planting of bearded iris at the Methodist Home. In 1952 meetings were changed from dinner meetings to luncheon meetings and the length of terms of officers was changed from one to two years. April 24, 1952, marked the beginning of a CIS tradition - a tour of local gardens featuring iris and a picnic. This was followed on September 24, 1953, with a sale of named irises with the proceeds dedicated to various projects.

Through the years, CIS and individual members have donated irises for many civic beautification projects. In 1973, CIS planted and maintained an iris garden at the Charlotte Council of Garden Clubs. The location was the former Van Landingham estate willed to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC-C). In May 1976, CIS won First Place (\$50.00) for the garden in the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce Bicentennial Contest. When UNC-C sold the property in 1977, the iris garden was moved to the downtown campus of Central Piedmont Community College. New varieties of iris were also planted.

B.J. Brown, CIS member and local hybridizer and grower, served as RVP for Region 4, 1984-1986. CIS hosted the Region 4 meeting in 1982. To celebrate the 40th Anniversary in 1988, a "birthday bash" was held for members and guests with special recognition given to the past presidents. Scrapbooks which chronicled the preceding 40 years were displayed.

In 1991, CIS sponsored a contest for the design of a chapter logo. The winning entry designed by Katharine Steele depicts a bearded iris and a crown which refers to Charlotte's being known as the Queen City. While individual local dues remain at \$3.00, a new category was added in 1991. The Patron dues (\$25.00) were used to purchase the Patron's Cup Award, a silver wine cooler which is a traveling award presented each year to the exhibitor of The Best Specimen of the Show (Queen of Show). In 1993, Ruth Holbrook was the first recipient.

The CIS became an affiliate of AIS January 1, 1994. Also in 1994, CIS initiated the February Seminar which usually consists of two parts - one topic generally "Getting Started with Iris," with a second or third topic being on a special iris category. Another first for 1994 was the first annual summer rhizome sale which was held outside at the Big Sky Bread Company. The sale has subsequently expanded to include other perennials and shrubs and is now held in the Community Room of the Black Lion, a shopping cooperative. The September sale started in

1953, also has been expanded to include a plant auction and a fixed-price sale which includes beardless iris, other perennials and some shrubs. Both sales are fund raisers that support the various projects of CIS. In addition, the sales provide us with an opportunity to educate the public about iris and iris culture.

In 1996, long-time CIS member Katharine Steele won the Williamson-White Medal for her miniature tall bearded cultivar PETITE MONET. Her work continues with the hybridizing of siberian iris and also work with white pseudacorus.

Our 1997-98 year was marked by moving our meetings from Tuesday covered-dish luncheons to Saturday morning meetings. Throughout 1998, CIS celebrated its 50th Anniversary beginning with a recap of its history at the April meeting. Again, scrapbooks were available for viewing. Both the Spring Show and the Fall Region 4 Meeting hosted by CIS highlighted our 50th Anniversary year.

A significant project initiated in 1998 was the creation of an endowed scholarship with the Foundation of Central Piedmont Community College, the income to be used to provide tuition and assistance to a student in the Horticulture Program of the college. It is anticipated that the income will be adequate for an award to be made for the 2001 college year.

While in recent years, the chapter has increased its participation in regional and other AIS activities, the membership remains primarily a local society. Presently CIS has 4 Accredited Judges, 3 Apprentice Judges, 1 Master/Active Judge and 3 Master/Retired Judges. One CIS member serves as secretary of Region 4. CIS remains committed to the original mission of the society "...to promote the culture and improvement of the 'Iris'..." as the millennium approaches.

RICHMOND 1920-30

AND THE MESSAGE THAT IRIS BROUGHT

Anner Whitehead, Richmond, VA

Among the less known stories of Richmond, Virginia, is that of how, in 1921, impressed upon a reluctant city government by a group of women of wealth and privilege, the Iris became the official City Flower, and of the far reaching effects of this inspired idea. This is the story of the discovery of the Iris by the people of greater Richmond. It is a story of public flower festivals featuring enormous displays of irises in shows sanctioned by the American Iris Society, of irises planted by hundreds in public parks, and of the rise of garden clubs throughout the urbs and suburbs of Richmond as part of a national movement in the years before the Depression. The story I shall tell you is pieced together from the published histories of the garden clubs, from the local newspapers, from the earliest Bulletins of the AIS, and the earliest AIS Check Lists. The records are fragmentary, but the picture they collectively present is remarkable, and leaves no doubt that Richmond was a great center of iris enthusiasm in the very earliest years of the Society.

The role of the James River Garden Club in our story is central; they were the movers and shakers who brought it all to pass. Thus we must pause a moment to meet them. The Club was

founded in 1915 by Mrs. Malvern C. Patterson at the urging of Mrs. Francis King, who was then Vice President of the Garden Club of America. The Garden Club of America itself was formed in 1913, and the list of its supporters resembles a Who's Who of horticulture and landscape architecture of the period. It contains many names familiar to irisarians, including John Wister and Robert Sturtevant. The mission of GCA and the clubs under its influence, including James River, included conservation of natural scenery and native species, preservation of historic gardens and landscapes, civic beautification, and popular horticultural education to encourage the practice of gardening in America. Mrs. King was particularly interested in this last, and especially in encouraging the children. She believed that gardening was a civilizing influence that nourished an awareness of beauty and fostered genuinely democratic attitudes among people. Concerned that sound horticultural information was available to only the wealthy, she wrote *The Little Garden* (1921), the first in an influential series of books on "the little garden" designed to bring superior information to the owners of modest gardens, especially those of the new neighborhoods which were developing around the perimeters of cities, including Richmond, Virginia.

So then, encouraged by Mrs. King, the James River Garden Club was formed in Richmond. Its membership was composed of wealthy, educated, influential women, many of whom owned estates and gardens of historical importance. Their work during the war was directed to supporting the effort, but with peace, and the empowering passage of the amendment to the Constitution granting them the vote, the ladies committed themselves to a campaign of civic improvement.

On April 14, 1921, the City of Richmond officially adopted the Iris as its floral emblem. Mrs. Thomas Wheelwright and the James River Garden Club brought their power to bear and, over very considerable opposition, ensured that the enabling ordinance was passed by City Council. This ordinance provided that "the flower known by the botanical name of Iris... may be displayed in the parks of the city, public and private, and otherwise appropriately used as such." The precise nature of the opposition to the ordinance is not recorded, but the city was in an austere fiscal mode, previous beautification projects such as one around the Lee Statue had not proven possible to maintain, and there are some indications that "the flower known by the botanical name of Iris" was not well known to the general public.

How the question of an official City Flower arose in the first place is also open to conjecture. The newspapers strongly suggest it was all the Club's idea, and I suspect that is accurate, but the published history of the James River Garden Club states that the Club was asked by "the City Fathers" to select a city flower, with several stipulations. "It must be a flower suitable to wear in the Mayor's buttonhole... but it must also look well in a pot and when massed in a park planting. It must bloom all the year round, be hardy outside, but force well in the greenhouse.... it must like it hot, but be able to stand a freeze.... it must be a flower of every color and one that no other city in the whole United States has ever thought of for a City Flower...." [So] "We... induced the City Fathers to get acquainted with and adopt the iris, the flower of chivalry, *with a sword for a leaf and a lily for a bloom.*" The quotation I have italicized, or misquotation, for it should read a lily for *its heart*, is from the English writer and critic John Ruskin, and it will appear in print in conjunction with iris events for years. One wonders what the greater populace made of it.

The newspaper's report of the ordinance's passage, which is not enthusiastic, reassures us

that the final factors in the selection of the Iris were that it is hardy, easy to grow, and cheap, however the day following passage of the ordinance, Cally Ryland's column in the News-Leader included paragraphs obviously originating from within the Club extolling the "wonderful possibilities in the iris," and encouraging the planting of irises around the fountains in the city parks. It was suggested that the city immediately hire a "landscape gardener" to answer public inquires and aid in selection of varieties. A helpful statement also informed the readership that iris was another name for "flags," as grew in some gardens, and also wild in the wet places of Virginia.

The selection of the Iris on the part of the Club women was timely, and politically astute. In 1921 the American Iris Society was in its earliest days but growing rapidly and creating an iris fervor in the gardening world. The adoption of the Iris as the emblem of the City, and the role of the Club in effecting this, could not but be looked upon with approbation by the cognoscenti. But the selection was not an insincere gesture by any means. The Club women grew irises, some in great profusion. Among those who were AIS members before January, 1921, were Mrs. Thomas Wheelwright of Chesterfield, her fellow Club woman and iris grower extra ordinaire, Mrs. William Northrup of "Norcroft" in south Richmond, Mrs. Joseph Walker of Woodberry Forrest who, after Mrs. Wheelwright, would become the third President of that federation of early garden clubs known as the Garden Club of Virginia, and Mrs. S. West Holden who would later be affiliated with the Petersburg Garden Club, founded in 1925. Other new members of whom we shall hear more were Mr. George Peyton, of Windy Hill Gardens in Rapidan, a commercial peony specialist who would be the Secretary of the American Peony Society, and Mr. H. P (Hendree Pairie) Simpson of Cherryville in Northern, Virginia, who would become a commercial iris grower and active hybridizer, registering TOPAZIN, ARLINGTON, ANDALUSIA, and KENMORE.

It was necessary for the Iris ordinance to be escorted through Council, for the James River Garden Club had plans. On May 5, 1921, less than one month after passage, they opened a public flower show at 816 West Franklin Street, featuring the City Flower in profusion and other flower exhibits and demonstrations. This was apparently the first flower show of its kind ever held south of Washington, and people came from great distances to see it. The effects would be felt for years. The local paper reported that the judges included Bertrand Farr of Wyomissing, PA, a Director of the American Iris Society and the first great American iris hybridizer, Charles Gillette, the noted landscape architect, and Mrs. A. B. Bauer, who was member of the Club who lived on Hermitage Road in what would become the suburb of Ginter Park. The newspaper also noted that Miss Mary Warwick would be showing as-yet unnamed iris seedlings. Then the paper reminded the citizenry that the Iris, their new City Flower, was also the national flower of their late ally France, and told a picturesque tale of Normandy peasants growing "flags" on their roofs. Mrs. Northrup won the AIS Silver medal, and the City Flower was on its way to glory. At some point shortly thereafter, the James River Garden Club planted irises in Monroe Park (2,000), on Monument Avenue, and at St. John's Church on Church Hill.

About this time, and probably in conjunction with the show, a small booklet called *The Iris* was compiled by Virginia Van Buren and published by the Virginia Stationery Company. Ms. Van Buren's notes say she wished "to popularize some meager information concerning Richmond's official flower ... to the patriotic citizens of Richmond with the desire that it will increase your interest in the iris and your love for flowers in general". This booklet, which has a colored rendering of something resembling *I. virginica* on the cover, includes the story of Iris, the mythological message bearer of the gods, as well as some cultural hints, poetry, the story of the

iris in French history, pithy quotes including the one from Ruskin, and a bibliography.

The AIS membership lists for later in 1921 include Miss Grace Arents, the very private horticulturally inclined Richmond philanthropist whose country home would eventually become the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, named for her uncle who founded the suburb of Ginter Park. Mrs. A.B. Bauer, and Mrs. J. R. Mosby, of West Grace Street, who owned a department store at Broad and Jefferson Streets, also appear, along with Thomas Fendall, of Leesburg, an early Virginia hybridizer (LOUDOUN, 1924).

In May of 1922, the James River Garden Club, with Ms. Wheelwright as President, staged another flower show, this time at 100 West Franklin Street, in which the public was invited to participate. This show featured the Iris as well as other flowers, and also the table settings, miniature gardens and floral arrangements which would become popular components of American flower shows throughout the twenties. Prizes included cash, and iris "roots" from Movilla Gardens, owned by John Wister, President of AIS. Mrs. Wheelwright took the AIS Bronze medal. Silver medals were rarely awarded in this period, the Bronze being the usual prize for the highest number of iris points in a show. Subsequently, her efforts in Richmond were noted in the Bulletin by John Wister, who also visited and spoke to the ladies of the Club in September, 1922. One hopes he brought along his famous set of photographic slides of irises, hand tinted by Grace Sturtevant.

But all activity to this point pales in comparison to the first great Floral Festival, held at the City Coliseum May 17-19, 1923, under the auspices of, yes, the James River Garden Club. The immense interior space was lavishly decorated and included several complete gardens with fountains. Nurserymen and florists occupied the first floor and dispensed souvenir flowers and horticultural advice to all. Recitals and public dance competitions were staged. Orphans were brought to the show and fed ice cream. The entire second floor was given over to competitive floral exhibits, including a tremendous exhibit of the City Flower, and children's exhibits featuring miniature gardens and birdhouses. Knowledgeable people said it was lovelier than Philadelphia's great show that year, the newspaper gushed shamelessly, and so tremendous was the public attendance that it had to be held open an additional day. The judges of the show were Mrs. Floyd Harris of the Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club, Mrs. Fairfax Harrison, then Vice-President of the Garden Club of America, who would later mastermind the complex restoration of Stratford Hall, and Bertrand Farr. In what must have been an extraordinary moment, the Bronze medal of the AIS was awarded to the aged veterans of the army of the Confederate States of America from Lee Camp, located on the grounds of what is now the Virginia Museum, for their display of *the flower of chivalry*.

1924 would prove to be an exceptional year for increased gardening awareness in Richmond and environs. In late April the James River Garden Club hosted the Annual Convention of the Garden Club of America at the Jefferson Hotel. They funded the hospitality for the eight hundred visitors with the proceeds of the 1923 Flower Festival, and, supported by member clubs of the Garden Club of Virginia, organized a legendary convention featuring tours of historic gardens throughout the eastern part of the State. Then, on May 23, yet another amazing Flower Festival opened at the Coliseum, organized by Mrs. Frank Duke of the James River Garden Club, with the expressed intent of making Richmond "The Flower Center of the South." On May 10 the evening paper had published a long article by Edith Tunis Sale to bring the matter of the City Flower to people's minds again. This article retold the story of the Iris in history, reiterated the

Ruskin quote, explained the name again, celebrated the Iris' range of color, textural effects, and fragrance, and noted its ease of culture. For the first time since Ms. Van Buren's book, the public's attention was called to the existence of Japanese, Siberian, and English irises. When the Coliseum opened for the show, the entire first floor, again assigned to merchants, was arranged to resemble a single immense garden. The second floor belonged to the amateurs, and to the children, and any one could enter an exhibit without charge. The fragrances of irises and roses and peonies filled the hall, and the iris exhibits occupied the entire end of the building. Newspaper reports do not mention the judges, but Bertrand Farr was in Richmond again that week giving a talk to the James River Garden Club on "Irises and other Perennials," so we may presume it was he who awarded the AIS Bronze medal to Mrs. Frank Cole of Chester. Mrs. Northrup again took many points.

The extensive list of winners in the newspaper for the 1924 Festival reveals that the competition had achieved a broad, one might even say democratic, appeal. Winners are listed from several localities in the state and several Richmond neighborhoods. Here we first meet Miss Mary McD. Beirne of Ashland and of the James River Garden club, and Mrs. W.A. Plecker of Hawthorne Avenue, identified in the 1929 AIS Check List as an "amateur gardener," who would later register the iris named GRACE ARENTS.

The interest in gardening and the Iris generated by these floral events was pervasive. There were quite a few enthusiastic gardeners in Ginter Park, and in 1924 they formed the Ginter Park Garden Club, adopting the Iris as their emblem. This organization, and the Henrico Garden Club of nearby Brookland District, would not be members of the Garden Club of Virginia, but would be instrumental in 1932 in forming the Richmond Council of Garden Clubs, with the Iris as its emblem as well.

On May 12, 1925, the James River Garden club held a judged iris exhibit in conjunction with a public plant sale in Monroe Park. Garden plants were sold at cost to make them available to persons of all economic levels, and this aspect of the event was judged a great success. Less successful was the iris show, which was open only to Club members, for the weather was uncooperative. The entries in the show were not up to AIS standards, and, newspaper accounts to the contrary, no AIS medal was awarded, although Mrs. A. B. Bauer was the winner overall. But the Richmond public had irises to view in 1925, for on May 18 the new Ginter Park Garden Club held a flower show in the Lewis Ginter Community Building, built by Miss Arents. There were nine classes of irises, mostly collections by color, in addition to exhibits of other flowers. The big iris winners were Mrs. Plecker, Mrs. A.B. Bauer, Miss Rhoads, and Mrs. Cox. About this time Mrs. Hunter Frischkorn of Chamberlayne Avenue who would become legendary in Ginter Park for her irises joined AIS. Also in 1925, a horticultural journal called Garden Gossip, to which we shall have occasion to refer, became the official organ of the Garden Club of Virginia, and Iris Lane, a small street near the Country Club of Virginia, first appeared in the City Directory.

There was a good deal of interesting iris activity in 1925 just up Route 1 in Ashland as well. The Ashland Garden Club held a floral show in May, which featured an iris exhibit judged by Mrs. John Patterson, Mrs. Conway Knox, and Mrs. E. V. Wolsenholme. Mrs. Wheelwright judged the other exhibits. This spring floral show, including irises, would become an annual tradition.

It is about this time that we meet Rosalie M. Dumble Davis of Ashland and Houston, Texas. Ms. Davis, another of our earliest Virginia hybridizers, registered an iris named KING'S CROWN

(1924), which was described in the Bulletin as of the type of HER MAJESTY, itself quite popular in gardens in the area. Ms. Davis was quoted at length in the October 1926 AIS Bulletin on the subject of the recently published lists of Approved and Disapproved varieties. She supported the idea of a White List, but felt the Black List was ill-advised since there was so much regional variation in how things grew. She opined that the decision of what to grow should really be left to the individual gardener, and personally recommended MORNING SPLENDOR, and ASIA, among others. MORNING SPLENDOR received an award for excellence from the Garden Club of America in 1926, and there is still a lot of it in Richmond.

In 1926, the Ginter Park Garden Club held another spring flower show with numerous iris classes, but James River was occupied with the great Flower Festival at Monticello organized by Mrs. William Massie (AIS, 1926), third President of the Garden Club of Virginia. An urgent call for aid had been received from the Jefferson Memorial Foundation to help save several original trees on the lawn at Monticello, and under these selfsame trees was assembled a huge public fund-raising festival with flower shows and plant sales and much merriment. James River was in charge of the iris show, but for some reason unrecorded, the American Iris Society, which expressed regret, could not "cooperate" with the Festival, and no medals were awarded.

In 1926, we again encounter Miss Mary McD. Beirne, of Ashland, who joined AIS and became a great supporter of the Iris. In June 1926 she gave a "scientific and intelligent talk on Iris [to the James River Garden Club]... which was one of the best of the year." There is every reason to believe this appraisal recorded in Garden Gossip, since in 1928 Miss Beirne would therein publish a sophisticated article on beardless irises which would include information even on *I. stylosa (unguicularis)*, and Spurias. In Garden Gossip's plant swap column Mrs. S. H. Hawes of Hawthorne Avenue in Ginter Park, a member of James River, offered *I. siberica* BLUE KING, *I. pseudacorus*, and *I. versicolor*.

By 1927 the annual Ginter Park spring floral show, in which the newspapers informed the public, "all the flowers displayed were raised in Ginter Park," had grown to a very respectable size with numerous iris classes. Among the 1927 winners were Mrs. Frischkorn, Mrs. C.E. Cox, Miss Rhoads, and Mrs. Plecker. It must be mentioned at some point, and this place will do as well as any, that an early article in Garden Gossip had noted the lamentable lack of cultivar names on entries in many of the floral shows being held in the State. The educational value of these exhibits was quite correctly thought to be diminished as a result. There is every reason to believe that a good deal of enthusiastic improvisation occurred in organizing and staging the smaller shows, and probably some larger ones as well, which makes the apparent fidelity of the James River Garden Club to AIS rules the more noteworthy.

On May 12-13, 1927, James River again staged an elaborate floral show in the auditorium of the Women's Club. This competition, which was open only to "amateur gardeners", featured an AIS sanctioned iris show judged by J. Marion Shull, hybridizer of MORNING SPLENDOR, and Lee Bonnewitz of Ohio, an expert in peonies and irises. It also included several classes of children's exhibits, as well as window boxes, water gardens, and arrangements duplicating floral paintings. Mrs. George A. Tower of the Club won the AIS Bronze medal, and other iris winners were Miss Beirne, exhibiting both beardless and bearded irises, Miss Cole of Chester, and Mrs. John Fisher of Ashland (AIS 1926). Mrs. Fisher also earned the AIS Bronze medal in the 1927 Ashland Garden Club show held May 19th at the Tobacco Warehouse. The iris classes in Ashland were judged by H.P. Simpson, and Miss Beirne won a club award for the best single specimen.

This floral show, which featured classes for children as young as three, and the 1927 James River show, were reported in considerable detail in the AIS Bulletin for July, 1927.

By 1928 it was clear that gardening, floral shows, and the City Flower were established institutions. The Ginter Park Garden Club staged an exhibit with many iris classes on May 15 at which Mrs. Plecker first showed GRACE ARENTS, and she, Mrs. Frischkorn, Mrs. Cox and Mrs. Sheldon took many ribbons. The Henrico Garden Club mounted an ambitious show at the Scottish Rite Temple, a block from Monroe Park, which was "sponsored" by, among others, Mrs. M. C. Patterson, Mrs. A.B. Bauer, and Mrs. George Turner. Mrs. John Dunnington, who exhibited a notable collection of irises, including siberians and her own seedlings, took the ribbon and grand prize, a silver medal awarded by Henry Mitchell and Company of Philadelphia.

The James River Garden Club show of 1928, their final such extravaganza of the decade, opened on May 24 in the auditorium of the Jefferson Hotel. The newspaper reported that since "the iris was chosen as Richmond's city flower several years ago a great deal of attention has been given to its cultivation." It emphasized the "experienced group" of judges for the many classes for this show, which were clearly intended to encourage excellence. These judges included Mrs. Frances Cole, George Peyton, Charles Gillette, Miss Ellen Glasgow, the Richmond novelist, and the iris expert, author, and hybridizer B. Y. Morrison, of Washington. The festival was a remarkable event with enormous participation and included early fruits and vegetables, late season beardless irises, roses, peonies, arrangements done by representatives of eighteen garden clubs from around the state, model gardens showcasing design ideas and ornaments, and numerous children's exhibits which, as the newspaper reported, showed "what the garden clubs are doing in the way of educating the child in a love of form and color." The AIS Bronze medal was won by Miss Beirne. This show is the more remarkable as it followed only weeks upon the first Historic Garden Week, organized by the James River Garden Club and the Garden Club of Virginia as a means of raising money to fund the restoration of Kenmore. So extraordinarily successful would this tour be, with thousands of people arriving from around the county to visit the private gardens of great Virginia estates, that the Club would devote much of their future attention to this annual event and use the proceeds in years to come to make possible the distinguished series of restorations of public historic shrines in the Commonwealth that continues to this day.

Notwithstanding the coming economic crisis which would affect all in time, the final two years of the decade saw an abundance of horticultural activity, including a proliferation of public floral shows, small and large, organized by the garden clubs which had themselves proliferated until virtually each neighborhood in the city had at least one and the phenomenon had spread well into the rural areas of central Virginia. Henrico continued to mount very ambitious shows at the Scottish Rite Temple, often judged by members of the James River club. The new Westover Hills club, founded by Mrs. Wheelwright, held its first shows, along with the Forest Hills club, and the Tuckahoe club of Westhampton. Ginter Park not only held shows in which the familiar names and others took prizes for many kinds of irises, but also held garden competitions, wherein both new and old gardens were compared for horticultural and design excellence. Notable gardeners around the city, including Mrs. Northrup, hosted garden parties for local visitors to raise money for charity, and anyone with the wherewithal to do so was welcome to visit the historic gardens of Virginia during Garden Week. And then in 1930, at the Henrico Garden Club's annual spring show, where irises were featured in numerous classes, and Mrs. Dunnington and Mrs. A. B. Bauer both showed seedlings, the judges declared "the most outstanding entry in the entire

exhibit" was a basket of lady slippers and quaker lilies tucked in a nest of pine tags, arranged by a nine year old child, Carter Atkinson. Mrs. Francis King would have been most gratified.

This, then, has been the story of the Iris in Richmond in the early days which, as the focal point of many extraordinary events staged by the flower mad members of garden clubs, and most particularly by the James River Garden Club, who pointed the way, truly became Richmond's City Flower, not by virtue of an ordinance railroad through City Council, but as a result of being grown and loved by the people of Richmond, to whom it had brought the great message of the delights of gardening.

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FANTASTIC !!!

Fred G. Stephenson

Fabulous! Spectacular! Marvelous! Sensational! What word would you use to describe this past bloom season? Words don't come easily to express the great season, the best that I've had in years, 90 to 95% of clumps putting up some bloom. With this I will attempt to tell about my iris bloom here. (Ed. Ingleside Gardens in Roanoke, VA.) The most startling tin that happened was that the Siberians were in full bloom before the TBs started blooming. Usually they bloom much later.

I like irises that are "different" so order from lesser known hybridizers. I was well pleased with the results. **BYE BYE BLUES** (Sutton '97) out did all the new ones, throwing up four bloomstalks on a 1-year plant. There were certainly most eyecatching. Standards are wisteria blue; falls are a lighter wisteria. Slightly fragrant with wisteria beards ending in widely flaring spoons. Entire flower nicely ruffled. Good bud count and excellent branching! Another attractive Sutton iris was **RINGS OF SATURN** (Sutton '97). This most attractive iris is a cool white with an edging of sky blue, falls are white with beards ending in 2" spoons. **AARON'S ROD** (Sutton '97) is a ruffled bluebird blue. Beards are blue tipped mustard ending in small horns. **HIGH IMPACT** (Sutton '98) is a ruffled white slightly infused pink. There was a surprise in the 3 1/2 inch upside down spoons or flounces.

Perhaps the most spectacular Sutton creation was **WING COMMANDER** (Sutton '98). **WING COMMANDER** has pale wisteria blue standards infused with a lighter blue and the falls are of a paler blue. Highly ruffled, 2" light blue flounces, excellent branching and a good bud count. A lovely iris! **RED RIDER** (Lauer '98) is an early, early bloomer with fine branching and bud count. Standards are a light burgundy with darker burgundy falls. Absolutely fade-proof and long lasting (5 days). **BLUE JAY WAY** (Lauer '98) has strong smooth colors. I believe it is the bluest in the garden. Everyone's eyes were drawn to it above everything else. It is just a bit closely branched to my taste, but has a very sweet fragrance. **BRONZETTE STAR** (Ev. Kegerise '92) I've wanted since I saw it as a seedling. It is well branched and holds its color well. **POND LILY** (E. Jones '95) put up a beautiful clump of the most beautiful pink, faintly tinted blue flowers.

The most pervading fragrance of any of my irises came from COMEDIAN (Mohr '91), a very hardy plant with pink and rose petals. On a cool evening the fragrance pervades the air for a distance. An old one and a consistent flower show winner as usual caught the eyes of every visitor to the garden. This was TITAN'S GLORY (Schreiner '81). This is a deep purple generally on "show quality" stalks. It is perhaps the most admired iris in the garden. RESTLESS REBEL (Tompkins '96) is a red-on-orange plicata that is hard to describe, but did real well. An iris that is not fully appreciated is URGENT (Nichols '92). This pink self presents the most unusual bifurcated and lacy style arms seen on an iris. If you have it, look closely.

The largest pure white iris in the patch was the late bloomer AVE (Tompkins '97). This is truly an all white iris with only a slight tinge of lemon tipping the white beard. BRINDLED BEAUTY (Ensminger '94) is supposed to be white with blue markings. Coming from the same rhizome there were two bloomstalks. One was brindled, but the other produced white flowers with no markings. BROADWAY (Keppel '81) has for years been reluctant to bloom. It really put on a show because it is to go out of the garden this year. Another that goes is COPPER CLASSIC (Roderick '79). It blooms every five years.

An under appreciated iris is ABBEY ROAD (Silverberg '94). I have never had an iris produce as many increases producing luscious cream flowers on sturdy well-branched stalks. It is extremely long lasting. Perhaps I DO (Zurbrigg '74) is the most consistent bloomer that I grow. I keep it because of its dependable bloom and rebloom. Another of Zurbrigg's creations is TRUMPET CONCERTO (Zurbrigg '81) that I keep because it was one of the first SAs I saw and it also is most dependable. SKYHOOKS (Osborne '80) usually is outstanding in my garden with lots of bloom with nice appendages, but this year, lots of flowers but NO appendages! Why?

Two other RE irises that bloom fairly consistently are RENOWN (Zurbrigg '92), and oyster white, and AUTUMN CIRCUS (Hager '92, a purple plicata that blooms quite early.

QUITE QUAIN (Burseen '90), a greyish white, is another that is overly productive of new rhizomes and the flowers do not bloom progressively, so a good look is not possible. I had high hopes for MESMERIZER (Byers '91). It is a beautiful clean white SA, but the stalks seem to be too weak to hold the flowers erect so must be staked, which is a negative with me.

THORNBIRD (Byers '84) lived up to its Dykes Medal award, producing a great clump. TRIPLE WHAMMY (Hager '90) is always the tallest bloomstalk in the garden and creates much interest as does TWICE THRILLING (Osborne '84). Most people do not comprehend the terms "Horns" until they see these two examples on which they stand out.

TIME TOGETHER (Hager '90) is one of the nicest in the brown class. It has excellent branching and 9-12 bud count. It is non-fading. ANTIQUE TAFFETA (Frances Brown '74) and BLUE RIDGE ECHOES (F. Brown '74) still hold a favorite spot in our garden in memory of her sharing with us.

The most unusual iris in the garden this year had been JUDY MOGIL (Lauer '97). Falls of this flower are very broad and flare horizontally and are usually a wine color, sometimes splotted with white. Usually fluted. The standards are white, lightly washed blue giving the sensation of being grey, but quite often splotted with color of falls and tend to flare with the falls. It reminds me of the old fashioned nosegay made up of two handkerchiefs of different color. Style arms

are fully exposed and carry colors of both falls and standards. It's a real novelty!

A bit of excitement has been created by what, I consider, the "perfect" iris, something I would never expect to find! Everyone who comes into the garden recognizes this as a flower that "grabs" their attention. This includes iris lovers as well as those who show little enthusiasm for the iris. CRUISE CONTROL (Lauer '95) is a bicolor (Ed. note: the hybridizer lists this as a neglecta) with snow white standards and wide flaring violet falls. Every stalk produced was of "show quality". The sturdy stems presented three perfect open blossoms, in a flawless presentation. The whole flower is highly ruffled. CRUISE CONTROL is not stingy about increasing its number in that each rhizome gives two new increases. If I were asked to choose the one top iris, quality-wise, that I have seen, it would be CRUISE CONTROL.

WHO IS FAIS?

Lois Rose, Vice President, Fredericksburg Area Iris Society

Who is Ruth Walker? If you are a new member of AIS and haven't yet made the acquaintance of this dedicated irisarian, you really should at first opportunity. Besides being a kind, gentle, generous person and my good friend, Ruth can truly be called the "Mother of FAIS".

As a child Ruth was introduced to the old blue and yellow flags by her mother. She continued to grow irises off and on as she moved about the country with her husband and raised her daughter, Nancy, but it wasn't until she and her husband retired and moved to Partlow in southern Spotsylvania County that her iris hobby really became serious.

About that time, Ruth learned about AIS in a magazine, joined, and then discovered her local chapter, the Richmond Iris Society, was inactive. Not to be stymied (Ruth is not easily stymied!), Ruth attended a meeting of the closest active chapter, Chesapeake and Potomac Iris Society (better known as C&P) in the DC area. There she got advice on how to re-activate her local chapter, and soon thereafter, in the spring of 1984, the Fredericksburg-Richmond Iris Society was born.

Ruth served as chairman of the Society from 1984-1987 and doubled as chair or co-chair of our iris sales and shows for many years. She drove to Maryland, northern Virginia, and the Shenandoah Valley to pick up rhizomes to assure the success of our early sales. She started our Harvest Dinner tradition and generally kept the society on track for many years. Besides recruiting new AIS members wherever she went (including the chef at one iris convention hotel!), she played a key role in starting three new AIS chapters in Region 4.

Her recruitment efforts have been recognized several times by the Region. She has attended national and regional conventions and served as Hospitality Chairman for the national AIS convention hosted by C&P in 1991. No small feat! For years, Ruth has been the only AIS accredited judge in our local Society.

But above all, Ruth grows iris - all types of irises. She can show you how to hybridize and how to grow iris from seed. She is a member of almost every AIS Section. She grows fewer

iris now than when I first met her in 1984, but even today her irises are carefully selected and beautifully grown to provide gorgeous show stalks. And being a well-rounded gardener interested in trying to grow almost anything, Ruth grows lots of companion plants. I can't begin to count the number of times she has handed me a shovel and invited me to dig a piece of something I admired - daylilies, oxalis, monarda. I've lost track.

Over the years Ruth and I have attended many local, regional, and national iris functions together. I have been mistaken many times for her daughter. And I am proud to consider her my "substitute Mom."

(Editor's Note: Don Spoon named one of his 1999 introductions RUTH WALKER).

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1999 SPRING CONVENTION GARDENS

THE CASTILLO GARDEN

Vince Lewonski, RVP Region 3

On May 22, those people attending the Region 4 Spring Regional meeting were privileged to be able to visit the garden of Glenna and Ed Castillo. This was the first garden visited on the tour and this no doubt heightened the sense of excitement and anticipation.

I was very impressed by the bonsai pavilion, partly because I liked the deck with its angled wood for shade, and partly because of the bonsai themselves. Bonsai aren't something that we usually see, and there was quite a variety on display here.

Those with keen eyes that managed to take their eyes off the flowers, may have noticed a pair of red foxes playing in the neighbor's yard.

There were three large beds of tall bearded irises - a first, second and third year bed. You had a hard time telling which was which from the amount of bloom in each bed? All irises were doing well, and were obviously happy here. The standout in the first-year bed was SIDESTITCH, a plicata with white ground and blue-violet edge. Three rhizomes had been planted together, and there were TEN stalks that were putting on a show. The other iris in the first year bed that caught my eye was VANITY (Hager), the ever-popular pink. I have seen this many times, but never with eight buds like it had here - normally, it gets about five buds. EPICENTER (Ghio '94), a purple-black plic with an apricot fall ground, was getting a lot attention due to its unusual coloration. This went on to win the B.Y. Morrison out-of-region award for the convention due to it's clump effect here. ROMAN CARNIVAL (Nearpass '97), from Region 4's own Charlie Nearpass, was a mass of bloom. This is very unusual looking, but hard to describe. The falls are covered with purple dots over a white ground, similar to PURPLE PEPPER (Nearpass). The standards are white, with tiny lavender dots and a yellow-buff edge. The beards are orange-yellow.

Others that caught my eye: SWEETHEART RING (Spoon), a medium yellow with a white fall ground, similar to JOYCE TERRY. This is an introduction of Region 4's Don Spoon. SARA'S BEAUTY, a purple and white plic with a mustard to violet beard. STATELY ART (Aitken '97), a tall clear mid-blue with bright red beards, nice form with light lace. AACHEN ELF is an MTB with yellow standards, lavender-violet falls, and lots of flowers. AZ AP an IB, is a light blue with blue beard. CHEROKEE NATION has amber standards flushed red, maroon falls with strong shoulder markings and a gold beard.

Siberians were just coming out. Those here were shorter than normal, as they seemed to be everywhere this year. Ones that caught my eye were GOLDEN EDGE, HARPSWELL HAZE, and CORONATION ANTHEM.

There was a blemish on the reputation of the garden, though! A visitor found ONE WEED!! True, it was small and easily overlooked, but there it was to mar the perfection of the garden. One visitor remarked that he thought the weed looked puny and stunted, and he offered to transplant it to his own garden, where it could shoot up to great heights and fulfill all of its weedy potential!



Beds one and two as one enters the Castillo garden.

RAINBOW GARDENS OF SARA AND WALTER MARLEY

Nancy Szmuriga, Region 19

The second garden on our tour today was that of the Marleys. Sara and Walter's "Rainbow Gardens" is on the property of Stoneleigh Farms where they are the farm managers. They live in the modern addition to an historic tavern moved to the site a number of years ago and restored.



Sara and Walter greeting their guests.

As we arrived at this extensive property, we were greeted by Sara in straw hat and iris print blouse and Walter in his straw hat with magic feathers, wearing cut-off overalls, his summer uniform, he said. As we walked up a very long driveway bordered by free form iris beds, you couldn't help being impressed with the nicely planned iris beds, both free form and formal, across the front yard and around the side by the patio. The large pond, set in the front yard, was filled with koi and edged with beardless iris, especially beautiful was a large clump of pseudacorus in bloom. The beds continue along the tavern side, the back slope and into the pasture where the Siberian and other beardless iris are grown. All the beds were immaculate, weed free and well presented for our iris viewing. Sara likes to incorporate the old, new, and antique iris with a few companion plants for better viewing. She sometimes plants different classes together as well.

Since we were to have lunch here, a line soon began to form. While we waited in line, Walter gave us a narrated tour of the old tavern. Luncheon was served in flower pots, similar to the lunch we enjoyed at Hooker Nicholls aunts at the Fort Worth convention a few years ago. As we waited, we were able to view Sara's collections of yardsticks, china and cut/pressed glass. Lunch, of course, was great and all too soon our visit came to an end and we had to board the buses for our last garden of the day.

Some of the iris that caught my eye were:

Tall Bearded: CINNAMON FRINGE (L. Cross '94) - a yellow, cinnamon, tan and white plicata. Lovely clump with dainty flowers. DAZZLING LORA (Spoon '96) - brilliant yellow. DOVER BEACH (Nearpass '72) - oldie but goodie, a blue and white amoena. EPICENTER (Ghio '94) - a dark cherry red and salmon plicata, ruffled with picoteed edge. I DO (Zurbrigg '82) - a white ruffled rebloomer with slight violet-green cast. IMMORTALITY (Zurbrigg '82) - a ruffled white rebloomer. JOAN'S PLEASURE (Zurbrigg '93) - a lacy, ruffled blend of gray, smokey, plum, and tan, very pleasing, lovely form, branching and clump. KNOCK EM DEAD (Ernst '93) - a ruffled blend of yellow, lavender and tan. LOUDOUN CHARMER (Crossman) - another oldie but goodie in cream and violet.

Border Bearded: BIG VICTORY (Burch '90) - ruffled white with yellow shoulders. ERIN CHARM (Stephenson '73) - pale yellow-green self. Spoon's seedling 937C known as SARA MARLEY - ruffled tan, pale melon blend, with lots of lace and nice form.

Other bearded: CRYSTAL RUFFLED (Dunderman '86) - an MTB, was lovely, off-white, lightly ruffled. STAR WOMAN (M. Smith '98) is an IB - deep purple and white plicata with a wide rim and white center. Stunning!

The Siberians SHAKER'S PRAYER (C. Warner '90) and SPARKLE (Hager '78), while a little short, were growing nicely in the pasture beds.

Knowing Sara, I'm sure there are plans afoot for more iris beds in the future. But one thing that will never change in this garden is its tranquil serenity and beauty.

WINTERBERRY GARDENS

Carrie Winter

As the bus approached Winterberry Gardens, there was a simultaneous gasp from the group followed by someone exclaiming, "It's a compressed Schreiners!" The beauty of thousands of blooming bearded iris cultivars was overwhelming.

What were some of the features that made visiting Winterberry Gardens an exciting experience? First, there was the sheer number of cultivars and seedlings, displayed very effectively in raised beds lined with rocks derived from the site. All paths were weed free (without the aid of chemicals) and arranged so that all iris were arranged for close viewing. Other perennials from the remarkably beautiful mass of Saponaria to the columbines, foxgloves, dianthus and many,

many daylilies, were interspersed among the irises. In addition, the garden contains many flowering trees and shrubs, including collections of boxwoods and dwarf conifers. A major point of interest in the front garden is the two life-size bronze statues of a mare and her colt. The garden had an enclosed feeling on the two sides bordered by the scalloped board fence with a somewhat extended feeling on the two sides bordered by forest trees. The birds were not forgotten in all the intensive plantings - a birdhouse was incorporated into a frame for climbing roses on the front border.

The rain came and interrupted judges' training and viewing of the garden for a time, but out came the umbrellas and rain gear by those who were prepared. Some who were not prepared also continued to view the garden, while the porch attracted others. Actually, the rain added an unexpected dimension to viewing the irises. First we were able to see iris growing in the garden that we had seen earlier on the show bench, but in addition, we were able to see the impact of a shower on the blooms. Some continued to look great; some were subdued; while still others were damaged.

By participating in judges' training, viewing for much of the time was focused on an indepth evaluation of a small number of cultivars rather than a more methodical overview. There was, however, limited time for seeing the Spoon introductions and seedlings as well as the Nearpass Collection of introductions and some of the Nearpass reselect seedlings. The Spoon introduction UNCLE CHARLIE (Spoon '99) (named for Dr. D.C. Nearpass) was radiate in the sunshine following the rain, showing why it had deserved the Franklin Cook Memorial Cup at the 1999 National AIS Convention. MY GINNY (Spoon '00) was blooming vigorously and was the conventioneer's choice for the Alice Bouldin Award for best Region 4 seedling.

Plans for a water feature in the west side of the garden and for extending the garden north are additional incentives (if any were needed) for returning in 2003. Add the guest irises which will be planted east of the present garden and you will have an irresistible treat. What a charming garden that incorporates artistic design, good gardening techniques, scientific hybridizing with emphasis on rebloomers, and a commercial endeavor. We look forward to the National AIS Convention in 2003 when Winterberry Gardens will be one of the tour gardens.



Garden host and hybridizer Don Spoon (left)

MORE SCENES FROM THE WINCHESTER MEETING



On Friday evening hybridizers Lloyd Zurbrigg (upper left), Bill Ackerman (upper right), Don Spoon (lower left) and Sterling Innerst (lower right) gave a royal entertainment in talking about hybridizing bearded and beardless irises, space agers, and the knack of naming irises.



Judges' Training on Garden Judging Tall Bearded Iris was presented by E. Roy Epperson, Dick Sparling, Katharine Steele and Carol Warner. This was in the Spoon garden. Roy and Dick are shown holding forth in these pictures.



Region 4 hybridizer Lloyd Zurbrigg being greeted by tour garden hostess Glenna Castillo.



Clarence Mahan and his Best Specimen of Show DUSKY CHALLENGER. He also won the Silver Medal and Certificate.

**MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
REGION 4, AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY**

Winchester, Virginia
Saturday, May 21, 1999

RVP Sara Marley called the meeting to order at 1:45 pm. Jack Loving moved, Phyllis Soine seconded, to adopt the agenda as printed. The motion passed. JaNiece Mull moved, Jack Loving seconded the approval of the minutes of the October 10, 1998, Board Meeting as printed in *NEWSCAST*, Vol. 40, No. 3, December 1998. The motion passed.

Reports of the Officers

Regional Vice President - Sara Marley

Welcome to all of you. I would like to thank the Chesapeake & Potomac Iris Society for hosting this May 1999 Annual Meeting of AIS, Region 4. Don & Ginny Spoon are co-chairmen and by the looks of the schedule found in the registration packets, we are going to be busy for the next two days. I would also like to thank everyone who has supported me in the past and those who are in my future.

Since taking office last October as your Regional Vice President, several events have taken place that have altered Walter's and my life. First, Walter drove me and we both attended the Fall AIS Board Meeting that was held in Bedford, MA. It was another learning experience that was priceless.

In early-mid April, Ruth Simmons, AIS Secretary was taken suddenly ill and after a short stay in the hospital, died April 23. On April 24, Clarence Mahan, AIS President, asked me to step in as the AIS Secretary. After several phone conversations, weighing all factors, with Walter's support and prayer, I accepted. I contacted Lois Rose, chairman of the Region 4 Nominating Committee and said that if the AIS Board accepted me as Clarence's appointee, I would not be a part of the slate as published in the March *NEWSCAST*. I was accepted by the Board on May 4. I was in attendance 90% of the time that the Board was in session on Tuesday and Wednesday. I also attended the meeting of HIPS and the RVPs.

As I received the membership lists, changes, etc., from Marilyn Harlow, the national Membership Chairman, I have written to all the new members, welcoming them to AIS, the Region and the local societies. Several have answered with an exchange of ideas. I hope that there is a follow-up on the local level. I have also answered notes that have come via e-mail, the Internet and 'snail mail.'

January is the time for all the affiliate groups to renew their affiliation with AIS. After pulling some hens' teeth, the job was finally accomplished March 28, 2 days before the cut-off date. It is imperative that these reports be completed early on as it affects each of the members in your affiliate group one way or another.

I will complete my one-year term as Region 4 RVP and will turn the gavel over to the new RVP upon confirmation by the AIS Board of Directors.

Assistant Regional Vice President - Glenn Grigg

There have been no changes in the scheduled Regional Meetings. We still have open dates for Fall 2000 and Spring 2001. The scheduled meetings are as follows:

1999 Fall	Eastern North Carolina Iris Society
2000 Spring	Tidewater Iris Society
2000 Fall	OPEN
2001 Spring	with Region 3, National Convention
2001 Fall	Fredericksburg Area Iris Society
2002 Spring	Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Suffolk Iris Society
2002 Fall	OPEN
2003 Spring	AIS National Convention, Region 4 Host

Immediate Past Regional Vice President - Anne Lowe NO REPORT

Secretary - Carrie Winter NO REPORT

Treasurer - J. Owings Rebert

The Treasurer's Report was accepted and filed for audit. (Printed on page 6)

Jack Loving moved, Anne Lowe seconded, that \$ 1217.34 from the general fund plus the monies generated by the Spring 1999 Regional Auction be used to purchase a Certificate of Deposit designated for the 2003 Convention. Motion passed.

Parliamentarian - Rosalie Figge

I served as Parliamentarian at the 1998 Fall Board Meeting. I was also a member of the AIS Committee to revise the article in the bylaws so that non-AIS members are eligible to belong to Sections.

Reports of Standing Committees

Auctions - Clarence Mahan

The generous contributions of plants as well as the spirited bidding of Region 4 members have ensured the success of our auctions. a three-part form will be available at this auction to facilitate the distribution of irises that will not be available until later.

Clarence suggested that while he had enjoyed serving as Auctions Chairman, he felt that it was time a new chairman was selected.

Beardless and Species - Carol Warner

Siberian and species were not impressive at the national AIS convention in Oklahoma City. Several Louisianas were growing and blooming well in the tour gardens.

Regional bloom seems to be quite good this year. Many siberian clumps had early bloom with short bloomstalks, but mid-season bloom is well above the foliage and prolific. The spring tour gardens all grow siberians and we look forward to seeing them in bloom.

I would like to see a study on which varieties do well in the South where plants do not get a significant dormant season. Plants seem to be extremely cold hardy but warm winters are producing shorter flowering and decreased stalk production.

The Society for Japanese Irises will hold their convention the last weekend of June in Portland, Oregon. Several members of Region 4 will be attending and are looking forward to seeing the efforts of several new hybridizers.

Both the Society for Siberian Irises and The Society for Japanese Irises are looking for areas to host future mini-conventions through the year 2006. Beardless irises should be featured at the 2001 National AIS Convention sponsored by the Susquehanna Iris Society, Region 3, but may not be seen at all at the 2000 Convention in Dallas.

Budget - Jack Loving NO REPORT

Historian - Margaret Stone NO REPORT

Judges and Judges' Training - E. Roy Epperson

There were no changes from the previous list of judges as printed in the December 1998 *NEWSCAST*. Ron Mullin, AIS Chairman of Judges, is reconstructing all lists of judges. No errors have been identified for Region 4.

The need for better grooming for exhibitions was stressed and a suggestion was made to incorporate "Grooming for Exhibition" into future judges' training sessions.

Legal Counsel - Bill Kuykendall NO REPORT

Median Irises - Richard Sparling

What a year!! I don't remember seeing such a display of the Dwarfs and Medians as I have had this year. I saw more MDBs that I've ever seen before in my garden. The SDBs were at peak the week before leaving for the AIS Convention and they bloomed like you see in pictures. Clumps with 8-12 bloom stalks out. Just ideal. Of course they bloomed the week after C&P's weekend in my garden, but we got to have garden judges' training on the Dwarfs. When I got back, the IBs were almost at peak and the Arilbreds were almost there also. Of course the BBs and MTBs are blooming right now but have not peaked yet - close, but not yet. I thought we were going to be early as my first MDB came out on the 18th of March about a week ahead of schedule, but then the cool weather in April slowed every thing down so the SDBs were a day or two behind while the IB were pretty close. The BBs, MTRs, and TBs look like they are right on time - maybe a day or two ahead.

Once again I would like to urge you to try Arilbreds. They perform just great for me. They have been cut by 50% from the full Arils and will grow in this area as they can tolerate more rain and humidity. A couple of them would knock your sox off they are so beautiful. They range in size from the Dwarf to about 28 inches. The Aril Society does not use our bearded height ranges - just smaller than 28 inches or taller than 28. There will be some Arilbreds available at the C&P and FSK sales this year. Or if it tweaks your interest see me and I am sure some accommodation can be reached.

If you haven't heard, there are some changes in the *Handbook for Judges and Show Officials* regarding Dwarf and Median iris. Read the new handbook, the latest *AIS Bulletin* and pay attention to future bulletins for further words.

Also, both the Dwarf and Median Iris Societies are clamping down on delinquent Display Garden Reports - that is, if you do not reply for two consecutive years you will be dropped. The requirements to have a display garden are easy - you have to belong to the Societies, have a reasonable showing of the classes, open your garden to the public and write a report each year. (Essentially, fill out a form with comments.) If you qualify and would like to be designated a Display Garden, contact me and we'll see that it is done.

Extend your season and grow Dwarf and Median iris. If you are only growing TBs, you can add a month and a half to your season. If people in the hot places in California and South Carolina can grow MDBs, so can you - just avoid the pumila varieties. Grow'em, you'll like'em!

Membership - Mary E. Brown

In total absence of good sense, last fall I volunteered to be membership chairman of Region 4. I did this with a pretty good idea of what I was getting myself into. But it has still been a learning experience. Not only have I had to become familiar with the geography of Region 4 but also had the computer to conquer. Fortunately, I have had a lot of experience with database design and use. Once the program and the file were up and running, there were only a few kinks to work out. Unfortunately, they are taking considerably longer than I had anticipated. The Affiliate information is in good shape even though it does change rapidly and constantly. The affiliate membership chairmen have been very helpful getting me straightened out and are sending me notices of new members as well as their sponsors.

I have added some additional fields to the database which have become very useful. These are telephone number, e-mail address, & FAX number. If any of the affiliates who have not sent me this information, but would like to have it included on their listing will forward it to me, I will be glad to add them to the file.

Two areas not yet addressed are: 1) To contact the members of the Blue Ridge Iris Society to find out who might wish to join one of the other affiliates; and 2) To get membership competition back on track. Both are currently being worked on.

Membership, broken down by type (as of May 15, 1999):

Single Annual	217
Dual Annual (26 x 2)	52
Single Triennial	207
Dual Triennial (53 x 2)	106
Single Life	15
Dual Life (13 x 2)	26
Youth	<u>22</u>
TOTAL	645

Membership, broken down by Affiliate Chapter/Society (as of May 15, 1999)

Allegheny Highlands	28
Carolina Mountains	25
Central Virginia	25
Charlotte Iris Society	29
Chesapeake & Potomac	175 (17 Youth)
Eastern North Carolina	45
Eastern Shore	26
Francis Scott Key	134
Fredericksburg Area	83
Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Suffolk	17
Tidewater	26
Virginia Peninsula	17
At-Large (formerly Blue Ridge)	32

Reblooming Irises - Lloyd Zurbrigg

It was another hot summer for much of Region 4 in 1998 and it appeared that there might be very little rebloom. However, the fall was lovely and freezing dates were greatly delayed all along the East Coast.

The Region 4 Fall Show in Charlotte saw a very modest amount of bloomstalks, but many people will remember the fine stalk of HARVEST OF MEMORIES brought by Phyllis Soine that won Best Specimen and some very interesting medians brought by the Spoons.

In November, I spoke at the Central Virginia Iris Society meeting in Richmond. There was a very fine showing of rebloomers, including a Louisiana. The Soine garden was causing cars to halt to see if what appeared to be blooming irises were for real!

Region 4 irises did well in the National Reblooming Iris Symposium, winning both first and second in the tall bearded category.

Plan now for your fall showing of irises. The Region 4 Fall Show and Meeting are the last weekend in October. Let us hope the weather is as propitious in 1999 as it was in 1998.

Robins - Libby Cross

Our beardless and species robin, The Wild Ones, had only one hitch in it's last flight, and is now moving right along.

The Short Ones Robin had to be re-started, and I was hoping that it would come back to roost within the Region, but its out-of-region members seem to want it to continue, for now, as a national Robin, so far be it from me to discourage this participation.

I have had no request for other Regional Robins, but am still ready to start one if there is enough interest. I am sorely in need of a director for the International General Interest Robin. Will someone in Region 4 *please volunteer* for the job??

Slides and Photography - Bill Mull

In 1998, I set up slide files in accordance with the following divisions:

- A. TB, IB, BB, SDB, MDB, both once blooming and reblooming iris
- B. Siberian
- C. Japanese
- D. Louisiana
- E. Species

A file has also been set up for videos.

I have written and e-mailed hybridizers and growers in the Region 4 area requesting that when they take slide pictures, they "take" an extra shot and send it to me along with full information on the iris. I have requested original slides as opposed to copies for quality assurance.

Since I have not had access to the policy and/or goals pertaining to the Photography/Slide Committee, I feel that there should be some guidelines in effect pertaining to the following:

- A. Rules, Procedures, and Costs for local program chairpersons to secure slides.
- B. Approved forms for responsibility, shipping and return of slides.
- C. Record keeping for the Committee.
- D. Reporting
- E. Cost control and approval
- F. Expense re-imbusement for the Committee
- G. Filing and storage of slides and/or equipment.
- H. Ownership of slides and equipment.

I would like to develop some program files to supplement the slides. These perhaps would be in the form of videos (Videos could be taken during the time of Judges' Training sessions or other programs given by members.) that could offer instructions or suggestions on the following subjects:

- A. Planting

- B. Dividing
- C. Disease/Insect Control
- D. Hybridizing
- E. Garden Judging
- F. Exhibition (Show Bench) Judging
- G. Grooming

I would like to limit the slides and videos to feature Region 4 members. Other AIS Societies offer slides that feature their specialty, but I feel that we need to be unique in promotion of our own region, its members and activities. This way we would be promoting our own hybridizers and growers and the direction or goals that they are achieving.

Any input that you may have to offer will be most welcome.

Youth - Dennis Pearson

NO REPORT

Webmaster - Bill Smoot

NO REPORT

Reports of Special Committees

Region 4 Culture issue of *NEWSCAST* - E. Roy Epperson

Roy reported that he is editing a complete revision of the booklet of the AIS *Basic Iris Culture* (BIC). It will be expanded to include 40 pages of text (6"x9" pages). The BIC will include up-to-date information on awards, insect and other controls with reference to iris as well as a breakout of the culture of beardless iris from the bearded iris. There will be a separate culture section on Siberians, Japanese, Louisianas, Spurias, Arils/Aribreds, and Pacific Coast Natives. The question is: Does Region 4 need a separate issue of *NEWSCAST* on the culture of iris in Region 4? It was stated that the cost of purchasing and mailing a complimentary copy of the revised BIC to each member of Region 4 would be approximately \$500.00. Anne Lowe moved, Jack Loving seconded the motion that a hold be placed on the Region Special Culture Issue until the new AIS BIC is available and that we purchase and mail one to each Region 4 AIS member. A decision to be made later if new and additional information is needed. The motion passed. It was agreed that an article in *NEWSCAST* could cover any culture issues specific to Region 4.

Revision of Region 4 Convention Handbook - Libby Dufresne

NO REPORT

2003 National Convention - Clarence Mahan, Convention Chair

Clarence reported that in addition to the chairmen of various committees announced previously, Harry Reed of C & P Iris Society will had guest irises. There will be two (2) master plantings: Walter and Sara Marley of Rainbow Iris Gardens and Don and Ginny Spoon of Winterberry Gardens. He pointed out that the people visiting the tour gardens will not be interested in what you now grow, but rather the guest iris which are typically planted in virgin soil. The convention will be held over a weekend in 2003 rather than the typical weekday span. The dates are May 16 - 21, 2003

Unfinished Business

Status of Regional Membership Contest - Mary E. Brown

Plans are being made to reestablish a membership contest for Region 4. With 647 members, Region 4 is now the Number One Region in membership.

New Business

Affinity Card. The possible use of an affinity card (credit card) by AIS is under study. There was no enthusiasm for "one more credit card."

Bee Warburton Medal. A medal is in the process of being cast to honor Bee Warburton, hybridizer extraordinaire of SDBs and Siberians. Part of the funding is in place, but \$3000 is needed to be added to the existing \$2500 already in hand. Region 20 will match up to \$2500 in contributions from other Regions. Anne Lowe moved, Walter Marley seconded, that Region 4 send \$250 (to be matched by Region 20). The check is to be sent to Jeanne Plank, Acting AIS Secretary.

AIS Historian Larry Harder has requested that all publications be sent to Keith McNames, AIS Librarian. Keith's address is 7711 Pries Drive, Salem, OR 97303. Copies of Regional minutes should be sent to RVP Counselor Mike Moller.

Display Gardens. Region 4 members are actively participating in the various Sections and Display Gardens Program. Affiliates are encouraged to sponsor garden tours within their chapters, not just when they are hosting a Regional meeting.

Flight Lines is being reactivated for inclusion in the AIS *Bulletin*. Barbara Figge is editor. A copy of robin letters should be sent to her at 6805 Kentucky Ct, NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110.

Model Show Schedules are being formulated and will be incorporated into the *Handbook for Judges and Show Officials* and will be available in January 2000. Certificates for each eligible component in the schedule are sent with the show schedule approval. The question was raised as to whether or not unused certificates should be returned. AIS Exhibitions Chairman Epperson indicated that this was not a worthwhile effort.

Nominating Committee. Lois Rose, Chair of the Nominating Committee presented a revised slate of officers. A revised slate was necessary since Sara Marley has been elected as Secretary of The American Iris Society.

Regional Vice President	JaNiece Mull
Assistant RVP	Glenn Grigg
Secretary	Carrie Winter
Treasurer	J. Owings Rebert

Fall Meeting Invitation. Glenn Grigg presented the invitation from the Eastern North Carolina Iris Society for the 1999 Fall Regional Meeting to be held October 29 and 30 at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

Adjournment. Anne Lowe moved, Epperson seconded, the motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

GENERAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERSHIP

Following the Saturday night banquet (May 21, 1999), the meeting was called to order by RVP Sara Marley who expressed thanks to the Chesapeake and Potomac Iris Society for hosting an excellent Spring 1999 Regional meeting. She also recognized those members serving in a national AIS capacity: AIS President Clarence Mahan; Director and Policy Chairman, Mike Lowe; Director and Exhibitions Chairman, E. Roy Epperson; Recording Secretary Anne Lowe; and Robins Chairman Libby Cross.

RVP Marley announced the action of the Board of Directors to send a \$250 donation (to be matched by Region 20) to the Bee Warburton Medal Fund. The medal is to be awarded annually to recognize a person making a major international contribution to the *Genus Iris*.

The Nominating Committee (Lois Rose, Chairman; Mary E. Brown, Glenn Grigg, and Margaret Stone) presented the slate of officers. E. Roy Epperson moved that the slate be accepted by acclamation and that the Secretary be authorized to cast a unanimous vote. The motion passed and the 2000 Region 4 officers are:

Regional Vice President	JaNiece Mull (Tidewater)
Assistant RVP	Glenn Grigg (Eastern North Carolina)
Secretary	Carrie Winter (Charlotte Iris Society)
Treasurer	J. Owings Rebert (Francis Scott Key)

Assistant RVP (and Awards Chairman) Glenn Grigg announced the winners of the various annual awards voted and presented by Region 4.

Alice Bouldin Award for best Region 4 seedling growing and blooming in the Regional convention tour gardens: MY GINNY (Don Spoon '00)

D. C. Nearpass Award for best introduced cultivar by a Region 4 hybridizer growing and blooming in the Regional convention tour gardens: JOAN'S PLEASURE (Zurbrigg '93)

B. Y. Morrison Award for best introduced cultibay by an out-of-region hybridizer growing and blooming in the Regional convention tour gardens: EPICENTER (Ghio '94)

RVP Marley announced that Don Spoon's UNCLE CHARLIE (Spoon '99) won the Franklin Cook Memorial Cup at the recent AIS Convention in Oklahoma City.

The meeting adjourned to the traditional auction.

REPORTS OF THE AFFILIATES

CAROLINA MOUNTAINS IRIS SOCIETY - Flossie Nelson



1998 started with a yearly newsletter from the Carolina Mountains Iris Society. Being in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains, we have lots of ice and snow this time of year, so it was decided to send a newsletter instead of a regular meeting.

A slide show was presented in April at the Henderson County Auditorium, then our show schedule was discussed and final show plans made. First Congregational Church of Hendersonville housed our spring iris show. Best Specimen of Show was the siberian PERCHERON. Around 250 people attended.

June found us at Opportunity House, an arts and crafts center in Hendersonville. We sponsored a wonderful Japanese Iris Show. Best Specimen of Show was PRAIRIE INDIGO, exhibited by Walter Hoover. August was our annual iris auction held at First Congregational Church. In November we were back to the library, where a panel discussion on disease and prevention was presented.

Walter Hoover, one of our dedicated judges, gave a wonderful Judges' Training on Judging Japanese Irises to Region 5. Flossie Nelson, also an accredited judge, give iris programs to three garden clubs with free rhizomes.

1999 will be much the same at our meetings.

CENTRAL VIRGINIA IRIS SOCIETY - Phyllis Soine

The Central Virginia Iris Society had an exciting year. We had programs by Lloyd Zurbrigg, Bill Shear, Lois Rose and Mike Lockett. We enjoyed having visitors from other chapters join us for some of these meetings. For the first time we have a guest iris program with members growing reblooming irises for our Millennium Iris Sale. We hope to be selling IMMORTALITY for the new Millennium. In order to reach new people with our iris sale and to accommodate different digging times for members, we will have iris sales at two (2) different locations this year, one in June and one in July. We are looking forward to another good year.

CHARLOTTE IRIS SOCIETY - Carrie Winter



The Charlotte Iris Society began a new biennium following our May activities. The Officers are:

President	Carrie Winter
First Vice President	Susan Mitchell
Second Vice President	Ruth Holbrook
Secretary	Barbara Blackwelder
Treasurer	Elaine Smith

Our 1997-99 biennium ended with a show May 1 and a garden tour May 15. The show "A Day at the Steeple Chase" included 121 horticulture specimens and a design division with 6 classes. Dave Hull won Best Specimen with HALLOWEEN PUMPKIN. Fourteen persons submitted entries in the show. The relocation of the show to the community room of the Black Lion provided a number of benefits. In addition to providing an attractive setting, we received assistance with publicity, set-up, etc. Also, more people visited our show than in previous years.

The tour on May 15 included 3 gardens of members : Carol and Charles Simon, Tina Babreski, and Dave Hull. A picnic was held in the Hull garden. Approximately 30 persons participated.

Our summer rhizome sale of bearded iris will be held July 17 at Black Lion. Other perennials will be available also. Our September sale of beardless iris and other perennials will include an auction and a fixed-price sale.

We continue to look for ways to increase continuing interest of members in the activities of the Charlotte Iris Society.

CHESAPEAKE & POTOMAC IRIS SOCIETY - Ginny Spoon



The C & P Iris Society is making good its goal to increase membership this year. We have given free youth memberships plus many of our members have promoted the Iris Society both at talks and in our gardens, generating more memberships. We have worked hard as a club to have interesting and educational programs. We have four accredited shows scheduled again this year and we are one of the few clubs to have a median show and/or a fall show. We have a joint beardless show and a joint Judges' Training session scheduled with our closest club, FSK. We enjoy their company and the great cooperation of their club members makes it more fun for everyone involved. We are fortunate to have a wealth of talent to draw upon right in our own Region. We have the President of AIS, Clarence Mahan, the new Secretary of AIS, Sara Marley, many hybridizers, judges, and great gardeners all within a short distance. The time and effort of these talented people is much appreciated and has been a bonus to all of our active members.

Our club has also scheduled three sales in three different locations this year and hopes to generate money for the upcoming National Convention in 2003. We have also hosted the Spring 1999 Regional without the usual two years to prepare and have been able to find an excellent location in Winchester and are providing three very fine gardens for the tour.

Don Spoon, our program chairman, has been working with youth members Ryan Carter and Brittany Stoll who have visited our garden, and has been teaching them the art of hybridizing. We are also providing Judges' Training sessions throughout the year for our members and have several apprentice judges and more students on the way to becoming apprentices.

Once again we are looking forward to great programs, new members, and beautiful irises to enjoy in the coming year.

EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA IRIS SOCIETY

Since the Fall (1998) Board Meeting of Region 4, ENCIS has met only once on February 6, 1999. That meeting was held at the 1999 Fall Meeting hotel so members could see where we are planning the Fall Regional Meeting. We also checked out the food!

The Society will host the 1999 Fall Meeting of Region 4 on October 29 and 30, 1999. The meeting will be held at the Sheraton Imperial hotel in the Research Triangle Park area with self-guided trips to the garden of Dr. Lloyd Zurbrigg and to the North Carolina arboretum and the botanical gardens at Duke University and UNC-Chapel Hill.

The summer meeting of ENCIS will be July 10 at the home of E. Roy Epperson in High Point, NC, for the annual auction and covered dish luncheon.

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY IRIS SOCIETY - Carol Warner



Next weekend, May 29 and 30, FSK will have a garden tour instead of our usual local show. Two new gardens will be open for the first time, along with 5 other gardens.

The joint beardless show with C&P Iris Society will be held June 19 at Behnke's Nursery in Beltsville. June 20 will be a joint picnic and Judges' Training session on Japanese irises at Bruce Hornstein's garden.

FSK has six (6) new student judges who are interested in becoming apprentice judges.

This year we had two small displays at home and garden shows instead of participating in the large Baltimore show. Several new members joined and there was a great deal of interest in the Society. Our two energetic sale chairmen are looking toward "the best sale ever" on July 10 at Watson's Garden Center.

We also have scheduled two informal meetings basically for new members at area libraries. This will give members a chance to attend a meeting without a luncheon obligation. We are a large group with several new activities designed to interest and retain our newer members. With everyone working together, we anticipate a great year enjoying and sharing our favorite flower.

FREDERICKSBURG AREA IRIS SOCIETY - Sharon A. Lipiec, President



In 1998 we had another lucrative sale allowing a donation of \$1,000.00 to the Regional treasury. This included the suggested \$5.00 per member donation rate.

Membership dropped slightly by January 1999, although our May 1999 show did bring in a few new members once more. The Show was a success with a good number of Artistic Design

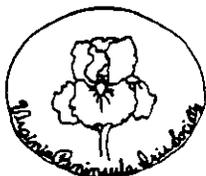
entries to augment the full tables of stalks. Peak was a few days past for bearded and too early for the beardless except siberians.

Our Garden Tour the next day brought out interested members and non-members with perfect weather. The cross-section of five gardens showed iris in the landscape and give an opportunity to see the cultural habits of the IBs and MTBs versus the more open clumping of TBs. Unfortunately, those interested in Siberians were to be disappointed at the sparse just-beginning bloom. With eleven (11) months of drought, the FAIS area could not show the normal growth of the different classes. There have also been strong gusting winds this season.

We continue to provide a Scholarship Award to a local area student attending the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg.

So far this year our programs continued to try to reach out to members. We began with a guest lecture on iris types and a slide program on SDBs. On the whole it continues to be a constant battle with frustration to generate attendance at all meetings and events. We have had no success with Youth.

VIRGINIA PENINSULA IRIS SOCIETY - Elaine Minnick



The VPIS has had good attendance at their regular meetings since January. We have had very interesting programs. One of our local judges, Bill Smoot, spoke at our March meeting on Louisiana irises. In April our society participated in the Christopher Newport University gardening symposium.

May was a busy month for us. We toured the gardens of three of our members. We also toured the gardens of Lewis Ginter in Richmond, which everyone enjoyed immensely. Our show was held May 8 at the Williamsburg Outlet Mall. The Best Specimen of Show was HOLDEN CLOUGH.

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NEW MEMBERS OF REGION 4

CHESAPEAKE & POTOMAC IRIS SOCIETY

- Thea Amr, 3612 N. Woostock Street, Arlington, VA 22207-4323
- Mary Baedke, 3704 Prince William Drive, Fairfax, VA 22031
- Grace Burnell, P. O. Box 890, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425-2151
- Carol Butler, 12399 Copenhagen Court, Reston, VA 20191-2509
- Antoinette Crowder, 6536 Montrose Street, Alexandria, VA 22312-2229
- Joseph Francis, 680 Dranesville Road, Herndon, VA 20170-3307
- James A. Gallahan, 6463 Oakwood Drive, Falls Church, VA 22041
- Susan Garneau, 3711 S 8th Street, Arlington, VA 22204
- Jack Gellen, 6515 Lily Dhu Lane, Falls Church, VA 22044-1414

Ethel Goldfinger, 10707 Cavalier Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20901
Ptery Iris, 1309 Wembley Drive, Largo, MD 20774
Frances L. Lawrence, 15508 Bounds Avenue, Laurel MD 20707
Evelyn Leedy, 1000 N. Sycamore, Falls Church, VA 22046-0822
Pat Leigh, 4720 Arbutus Avenue, Rockville, MD 20853
Keith and Brenda Low, 8417 Farrell Drive, Chevy Chase, MD 20815
Kate Marosek, 3411 Alba Place, Fairfax, VA 22031-3086
Karen Mayhew, 9409 Windy Hill Drive, Nokesville, VA 20181
Janice D. Melia, 13400 Lydia Street, Silver Spring, MD 20906-5224
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Devon Stoll, 8119 Martha Street, Alexandria, VA 22309
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Bruce Wheeler, 17609 Country View Way, Ashton, MD 20861

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Nancy E. Schoppert, 4343 Ridge Road, Mt. Airy, MD 21771-8925
Marcia Smith, 3346 Knolls Parkway, Ijamsville, MD 21754-9037

FREDERICKSBURG AREA IRIS SOCIETY

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Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hayden, 6613 Willow Pond Drive, Fredericksburg, VA 22407-8408
Leroy and Florence Rodgers, 12200 Rodgers Lane, Fredericksburg, VA 22407-7015

KOMMENTS FROM KIRKLEE and THE EDITOR

Some of the 1999 AIS Awards

Dykes Memorial Medal: HELLO DARKNESS

John C. Wister Memorial Medal: STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN
BOOGIE WOOGIE
RHONDA FLEMING

Morgan-Wood Medal: ROARING JELLY

J. A. Payne Medal: GEISHA OBI

Region 4 Hybridizers: JOY PETERS (W. Ackerman) 2nd runner-up to Payne Medal

TB Award of Merit: ROSALIE FIGGE (Jane McKnew)

HM TB: LITTLE JOHN (D. Spoon)
FOREVER IN LOVE (Mahan)

Sharon Lipiec wrote in the July 1999 IRIS ROOTER NEWS "One of THE deepest pink TBs is OVATION (Tompkins '69) -- hey, it attained "Historic" status this year. A real standout in a sea of colors, it is one that really draws the eye. Those of us viewing in it Phyllis Soine's garden in 1998 were of the same opinion. How has it been overlooked? Perhaps because the catalog photos do not do it justice. If you see it at a sale, grab it. I did."

When Chet first saw this seedling in bloom, he gave it "...a standing ovation..." and so its name. OVATION probably has the deepest saturation of pink seen in irises today. Unfortunately, it has poor form, low bud count, and only adequate branching. Has it been overlooked? OVATION was voted an HM in 1970 but did not rise any farther in the AIS awards system. Its sister PINK PUSSYCAT was better in all respects except deepness of color. PUSSYCAT has almost been forgotten, but OVATION lives on due to its color. Don Spoon is making advances in setting the saturation of pink color onto good form and other good attributes of TB irises.

There was plenty of material for this issue of *NEWSCAST*, so I used everything and have produced a larger than normal issue. I have particularly enjoyed working with this issue and its historical focus. Bill Mull also supplied me with many photos of the Spring Regional meeting in Winchester.

Upon further evaluation of my future time commitments to various projects, I have decided to continue as Editor of *NEWSCAST* at least through 2000. Neither I nor any other editor can be successful without the continued support of the members/writers of Region 4. At this point, there is no backlog of articles to be used in future issues. The pot is empty. FILL IT UP!!

Roy

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